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Council recommends approval for shopping centre revamp

CASTLE QUAY PLAN BACKED

By Oliver Evans

CONTROVERSIAL plans to extend Banbury's Castle Quay shopping centre should be approved, a council planning officer has said.

Plans for a supermarket, cinema, restaurants and hotel have been backed by Cherwell District Council's Graham Wyatt.

Councillors will be asked to make a decision at a meeting next Thursday.

A 1,044-signature petition from users of the General Foods Sports and Social Club – to be demolished for public space – opposed the plans.

The report said land rights were a "private matter" between Castle Quay owners Scottish Widows Group and the Spiceball Park Road club.

Planning permission does not override this, he said, though Scottish Widows could ask the council to force the land sale.

Some 80 letters opposed the plans, including from Thrupp Canal Cruising Club, as the Oxford Canal runs through the site.

Secretary Sarah Chard said the scheme "further sidelines the canal and will increase its isolation from the town centre".

Banbury Town Council



An artist's impression of the proposed Castle Quay development

objected as "land is part of the designated cultural quarter" and lorries could struggle to deliver to the supermarket.

Banbury Civic Society chairman Rob Kinchin-Smith said: "It will not benefit the historic town centre and will instead slowly drain what remaining life the town centre has into Scottish Widows' hands."

The northern car park would be demolished but new parking would increase total spaces from 465 to 640, with two new bridges over the Oxford and Cherwell canals.

The supermarket – for which a retailer has not been announced – would go on the site of the former Spiceball Leisure Centre, which closed in 2010. The cinema and restaurants would also go to the north.

Mr Wyatt said the plan met the council's strategy "to strengthen the town centre retail base and enhance the leisure offer and the night-time economy" and gave the centre a major supermarket.

And he said it would "increase leisure development within the town centre without

impacting on its ability to draw future investment into it".

The planning committee will be asked to make a decision at the council's offices in White Post Road, Bodicote, from 4pm. The public can attend.

Scottish Widows and the owners of Banbury Cross Retail Park failed last month to stop an out-of-town retail park going ahead.

The High Court upheld district council permission for 'Banbury Gateway', to include a Next and Marks & Spencer at Wildmere Industrial Estate, near junction 11 of the M40.

Losing battles to stop homes

DEVELOPERS will find it easier to get controversial housing estates built in North Oxfordshire after council bosses lost an appeal over 85 homes, an MP has said.

Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry spoke after the Planning Inspectorate overturned a decision by

Cherwell District Council to reject plans for the homes, off Banbury Road, Deddington.

Inspector Paul Crysell overturned the council's verdict because he said it had not finalised a so-called local plan for where other major estates should go.

Conservative Sir Tony

said: "It has been incredibly difficult defending situations on appeal where there has been neither an up-to-date local plan, nor a robust five year housing supply."

He found the council was also not getting enough homes built at agreed locations to meet demand for the next five years.

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Drink-driving arrests

POLICE in the Thames Valley arrested 207 motorists on suspicion of drink-driving from December 1-23.

A total of 207 people were held in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire as part of a campaign by police.

The 'Is it worth the risk?' campaign has seen 169 men and 38 women arrested.

This represented a 10 per cent increase in arrests of

men – up from 153 this time last year – and a 24 per cent decrease in arrests of women – down from 46 last year.

In total, 114 of the arrested people have been charged, with 36 bailed and 30 released with no further action.

This year's arrests show a four per cent increase on the 199 arrests made during a similar Christmas drink-drive clampdown in 2012.

Health boss is sorry about longer waits in A&E



Hospital boss Paul Brennan

Chief pledges cash to tackle winter crisis

By Oliver Evans

A HOSPITAL boss has apologised after figures showed A&E waiting targets had only been hit once since late October.

Paul Brennan said extra cash was being put into tackling the problem as more people attended emergency departments during the winter months.

A Government standard demands hospital authorities admit, transfer or discharge at least 95 per cent of all A&E attendees within four hours.

But since October 21, this has only been hit once, in the week ending November 17, at Banbury's Horton General Hospital and the John Radcliffe in Oxford.

Between October 21 and the week up to Friday, December 13, 1,405 visitors to A&E were not admitted within four hours.

Mr Brennan, director of clinical services at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "We are sorry when patients wait longer than the target time."

But he added: "It is important to understand that patients would not necessarily have waited without being seen and would undergo assessment and diagnosis before being transferred when it is clinically appropriate to do so."

Hospitals have struggled with a rise in demand – emergency in-patient admissions have risen ten per cent since 2009 – with bosses warning many could get help from other NHS services.

Figures show only about a quarter of those who attend county A&E departments result in an emergency admission, which are prioritised by medics.

Mr Brennan said: "While we have not quite achieved the target of 95 per cent in

every week, at least 90 per cent of patients arriving at our emergency departments are assessed, treated and either discharged home or admitted to a ward within four hours."

The trust is measured quarterly and the 95 per cent target was met in July to September. Overall, the figure is 94.2 per cent for October to December.

Mr Brennan said the trust and social care organisations such as Oxfordshire County Council were "working hard to manage the ongoing pressures and to lessen the impact" on A&E.

An extra £10.2m from the Government is going on extra staff, such as therapy support in A&E, he said, while 65 extra beds have been opened and funds are being used "to support people in their own home".

He said: "It's vital that our emergency departments are able to concentrate on patients who are really unwell."

Other services, including GPs and pharmacies, should be considered by residents, he said,

particularly for existing health problems made worse in the cold.

Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry said he suspected people were going to A&E "when they think it may be difficult to contact their GP practice, or if they suspect they can't get a prompt appointment with their GP practice".

Victoria Couling, Royal College of Nursing officer for Oxfordshire, said: "Emergency departments need the resources and staff to deal with a high level of demand all year round, but it is particularly important that winter pressures do not tip hospitals over the edge."

A&E performance at the John Radcliffe Hospital and Horton General Hospital, 2013

Week ending	A&E visits	Emergency cases	Not seen in 4 hours	% seen in 4 hours
Dec 15	2,311	653	227	90.2%
Dec 08	2,459	648	190	92.3%
Dec 01	2,367	676	241	89.8%
Nov 24	2,234	612	207	90.7%
Nov 17	2,232	669	94	95.8%
Nov 10	2,225	651	140	93.7%
Nov 03	2,301	699	152	93.4%
Oct 27	2,323	721	154	93.4%
Oct 20	2,316	727	79	96.6%

Source: NHS England

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Foxes celebrate as the hounds follow an artificial scent



LEFT: A rider wearing hunting pink prepares for the off



RIGHT: The crowds are addressed by a hunt official

6,000 watch as hunters set off



A young huntgoer meets the foxhounds

By Freddie Whittaker

THOUSANDS of people packed Chipping Norton's town square for the launch of the traditional Boxing Day ride of the Heythrop Hunt.

Around 6,000 people turned out to see off the hunt, which traditionally sets out from the Cotswold town every Boxing Day morning.

The popularity of the event has been heralded by hunt organisers as a sign that the sport is still supported by many people.

Joint master Nessie Lambert said: "Nothing beats the support we have from the local community. It is always lovely to see the town packed again to welcome the hounds on Boxing Day."

"We are very lucky to have so much help throughout the year from farmers and supporters, but today is the day on which everyone comes out to cheer the hounds and hunt staff."

The event, which has seen a scent used since the Government banned fox hunting, is regularly criticised by animal campaigners.

There were no signs of any protesters.



Heythrop Hunt meets in the centre of Chipping Norton for its traditional Boxing Day Hunt

OX 64326

Caravan stolen

■ A WOMAN has admitted at Oxford Crown Court to stealing a caravan.

Kerry Stevens, 36, of David Murray John Building, Brunel Centre in Swindon, admitted theft of the caravan from Barnstones Caravan Park, Great Bourton, on July 10. The occupant and owner was away. She also admitted handling stolen goods – namely a silver Mazda Bongo – on the same date.

Judge Ian Pringle was told the theft happened at 3.55am after she was offered £100 to drive the Mazda and the caravan that was attached to it by two people she knew from the travelling community.

Stevens has been bailed to be sentenced on January 16.

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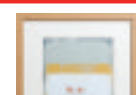
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InBRIEF**More time for bus fee talks**

■ OXFORDSHIRE County Council has extended the consultation into its home-to-school transport policy. The consultation was due to end on December 20 but has now been extended to January 14. Anyone who has yet to submit their views should visit oxfordshire.gov.uk/htsp consultation

Solar bid veto

■ A SOLAR park planned for land between Shutford and Epwell has been refused. Cherwell District Council's planning committee rejected the 7.47-hectare plan in the Longhill area after some 69 letters voiced concerns about its visual impact on the countryside.

'Fishy' refuse

■ A COUNCIL has cleared refuse the equivalent weight of an adult blue whale from Cherwell's streets in the past year. The total was worked out after six litter blitzes by Cherwell District Council in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington. In total, 105 tonnes of rubbish was taken away. From January 27 to 31 the team will tackle the Bretch Hill area of Banbury.

Prosecution case collapses Scrap man walks free from court

A SCRAP metal yard worker has been found not guilty of accepting "suspicious" cables from undercover police officers posing as thieves.

Tommy Smith, of Bloxham Road, Bloxham, was cleared of one count of attempting to conceal, convert or disguise criminal property on March 29 last year.

The prosecution alleged that Mr Smith accepted metal from two undercover officers, codenamed Andy and Kinger, who pretended to have recently stolen it.

But throughout his trial, the 36-year-old maintained he had suspected the pair were thieves and was trying to trap them by playing along.

A jury at Oxford Crown Court convicted his brother Joey Smith, 24, of five counts of the same offence, but could not reach a verdict in relation to Tommy Smith.

On December 20 Jonathan Stone, who prosecuted the case, told Judge Ian

By Joe Nimmo

Pringle that the Crown Prosecution Service would not be seeking a retrial.

Mr Stone said: "The crown has determined that there is no longer a realistic possibility of a conviction and, in any case, pressing ahead with the prosecution would not be in the public interest."

Judge Pringle replied: "That is a course which I agree with. I think it is a sound judgement. I formally enter a not guilty verdict in this case."

Tommy Smith now faces three other allegations relating to a shotgun, a pepper spray and a stun gun allegedly found when the police raided Smiths of Bloxham, in Milton near Banbury.

The charges are possessing a shotgun without a licence and two counts of possessing a banned weapon.

He has not yet entered a plea and was released by the court on unconditional bail.

InCOURT

Verdicts from magistrates courts around the county

■ AARON FRENCH, 22, of Howard Road, Banbury, admitted possessing cannabis, a Class-B drug, in St Mary's churchyard, Banbury, on October 5. Given a 12-month conditional discharge and told to pay a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ KEITH CHRISTIE, 48, of Marlborough Place, Banbury, admitted assaulting a man and a woman at a house in Broad Street, Banbury, by beating them and damaging crockery at the property on October 1. A restraining order imposed forbidding contact with the victims or entering the house. Fined £400 and ordered to pay a £40 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ AARON MARRIOTT, 28, of Poolside Close, Banbury, admitted drink-driving in Lord Fielding Close, Banbury on June 8. Had 43mg of alcohol in 100ml of breath over the legal limit of 35mg. Fined £110, ordered to pay a £20 victims' surcharge and £20 costs and given a 12-month driving ban.

■ JAN SOBALA, 49, of no fixed address, admitted stealing two bottles of port and four cans of lager from

Tesco in Blacklock House, Middleton Road, Banbury, on November 17. Given a two-year conditional discharge and told to pay a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ TARA WILSON, 30, of Over Norton, near Chipping Norton, admitted stealing cosmetics worth £48.67 from Boots in High Street, Chipping Norton, and clothing worth £92 from Beals in High Street, Chipping Norton, on October 29. Also admitted assault by beating on July 5 in Reading. Given a 14-week prison sentence suspended for 12 months.



■ IAN MCCOY, 36, of Calthorpe Road, Banbury, convicted of assault on April 25 in Banbury. Community order made with 80-hour unpaid work requirement and told to pay £50 compensation, a £60 victims' surcharge and £500 costs.

■ CHARLES BRADLEY, 37, of Windrush, Banbury, admitted driving above the 30mph speed limit on the A44, Manor Road, Woodstock, on April 29. Fined £160, ordered to pay a £20 victims' surcharge and £65 costs and licence endorsement with three points.

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Deputy Prime Minister announces extra funding for two-year-olds

£5.5m boost for childcare

MORE two-year-olds will be entitled to free childcare as the Government gives more than £5.5m to Oxfordshire parents.

It will mean just under 2,000 two-year-olds in the county – 40 per cent – will be entitled to 15 hours of free childcare a week from next September.

Until now only parents of two-year-olds getting benefits because they are on a low income, or receiving certain benefits, qualified for the free childcare. But now the categories of those entitled to the childcare funding have been extended.

The change is part of £755m of funding across the UK announced by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg. In total Oxfordshire will receive £5,652,580.

Currently, 1,160 two-year-olds are entitled to the scheme. While the move has been welcomed by childcare providers and parents, there are concerns about whether all nurseries are suited to look after two-year-olds.

Mother Sarah Barrett was concerned parents who actually need free childcare would not be entitled under the scheme.

Ms Barrett, who has a three-year-old daughter, Erin, said:

By Sophie Scott

"When my daughter was that age, I would have really needed that."

"My concern is about who gets the priority for this. Will it actually be the people who really need it? Those parents who have to work, like I did."

"If it is people who are at home and could look after their two-year-old, then I don't really agree with that."

"But it is good that children will be educated from an earlier age."

Anna Thorne, manager of an Oxfordshire family centre, said: "This has been the plan for a while now."

"We provide places for funded two-year-olds

and we will develop the provision to be able to take more two-year-olds."

"It can be a really great thing, but there are issues around it. It is really important the provision is going to be homely, loving and caring, because they are two-year-olds and it can be very different."

"When you have working parents they will need childcare, but only so long as the provision that is taking the funded places is able to do so at a high enough standard."

"There needs to be plenty of staff who are suitably qualified as well as making sure there are lots of stimuli for the children."

"There is a concern that the local authority is cutting funding for early years support and without that it could make this job much harder."

Mr Clegg said: "Parents, local authorities, nurseries and childminders should take up the offer their children are entitled to, make sure that places are available and expand local childcare provision."

"Every child deserves to have the best start in life, regardless of their background, financial situation or family set-up, and this funding will help even more children and families get on in life."



Sarah Barrett with her three-year-old daughter, Erin

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County included on Government's gas-extraction map

MEP issues warning over gas 'fracking'

LICENCES to drill for shale gas using the controversial "fracking" technique will be made available in Oxfordshire.

Fracking, in which water is blasted underground to release gas, could lead to an energy boom for those who use it.

And its supporters say it is making countries such as America self-sufficient in energy supply.

But opponents say it causes pollution, could scar the countryside and could trigger earthquakes. Attempts to introduce it in the UK so far have seen large-scale protests.

Now, though, the county has been included on a Government map of areas under consideration for the next licensing round for fracking, which will take place in mid-2014.

A 347 sq mile area in the north of Oxfordshire has been identified as a possible source of shale gas.

Environmentalists fear what

By Damian Fantato

will happen next – although officials and developers say nothing is yet planned.

Green MEP for the South East Keith Taylor has been a vocal opponent of fracking.

He said: "Of course the Government is the potential upon people the potential financial benefits of allowing shale gas extraction near their homes.

"But in reality, many people

will be unwilling to accept air pollution, noisy trucks, gas flaring and potential water contamination in exchange for the Government's bribe.

"The Government is ramping up its pro-fracking rhetoric ahead of issuing the next round of drilling licences but campaigners and concerned residents won't be tricked into believing the hype."

Oxfordshire is part of more than 40 per cent of Britain that will now be open to fracking by developers, far more than the seven per cent now available.

In its strategic environmental assessment, the Government says fracking could create thousands of jobs and plough almost £1bn back to local communities.

A road map issued by the Government sets out the series of permits and permissions developers need to get before drilling for onshore oil and gas.

Energy Minister Michael Fallon said: "There could be large amounts of shale gas available in the UK, but we won't know for sure the scale of this prize until further exploration takes place.

"It is an exciting prospect, which could bring growth, jobs and energy security."

Shale gas company Cuadrilla, which has carried out fracking in Lancashire and West Sussex, said it had no plans to frack in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire County Council, the local authority which deals with the extraction of minerals, said it had held no discussions with any companies about fracking.



Green MEP for the South East Keith Taylor stands near a fracking drilling rig

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■ Thames Valley Police to reduce cash contribution as it tries to squeeze budget

Axe to fall on CCTV funding

POLICE are to pull the plug on nearly 50 per cent of their CCTV funding – potentially forcing local councils to cover the cost.

Thames Valley Police is planning to withdraw £300,000 from funding for the region's camera network – that is 44 per cent of its £675,614 annual contribution.

Its current £329,440 budget in Oxfordshire will fall significantly as a result.

Local councils, which currently contribute the same £329,440 sum to the overall pot, could be forced to pay more, or let the scheme survive on less money.

The proposal has triggered a review of the system, which could mean job losses if county monitoring stations move under one roof with the help of newer wireless technology.

Oxfordshire's 268 cameras are currently monitored by more than 20 staff in police stations in Banbury, Oxford, Abingdon and Witney.

One senior figure on the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP), which is made up of council representatives and the emergency services, has raised concerns.

Chairman Bill Service said: "The question for me is whether the funding lost should be picked up at a district level.

"It is hugely important we have CCTV in order for people in their local communities to feel safe.

By Ben Wilkinson

"I have reservations but we will have to wait and see what happens. Technology is moving on swiftly."

He said the move could mean losing staff who may no longer be needed, adding: "It's one option and I should imagine they would be foolish not to look at it.

"I can eventually see all the emergency services for each area coming under one roof."

The plan is to cut £100,000 from the 2015/16 police budget and then £200,000 the following year. Overall, more than £3m is put into CCTV in the Thames Valley region every year.

Rod Matheson, Thames Valley Police Unison branch secretary, said police staff jobs could be transferred to councils or even lost as part of the changes.

He said: "I suspect with that sort of change there would be the inevitable cuts to slim it down."

Bill Oddy, head of community services at West Oxfordshire District Council, said he did not think the number of cameras would fall – but the number of monitoring centres could.

He said any new system would be more efficient, adding: "Technology should help achieve that."



A typical CCTV camera and lighting – which could be facing a funding cut from Thames Valley Police

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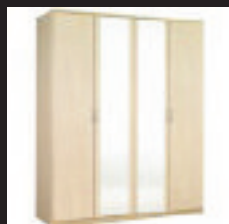
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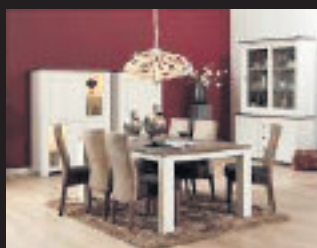
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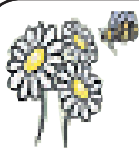
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LET'S BE HAPPY TOGETHER Straight forward, kind and sincere Swindon woman, 67, N/5, likes music and current affairs, would like to meet a man, age 67-77, for fun, friendship and hopefully more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 155949 or send a text to 80360

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STILL SEARCHING FOR YOU Easygoing, kind Oxford male, 46, medium build, likes eating out, walks, nights out and the cinema, would like to meet a slim lady, age 40-50, for love and romance. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 157537 or send a text to 80360

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ACCEPT EACH OTHER Easygoing Wantage male, 52, own car, works full-time, likes most sports, would like to meet an outgoing female, for good times leading to more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 153164 or send a text to 80360

TIME FOR A CHANGE Friendly, expressive and vibrant Kidlington male, 52, with plenty of interests in life, would like to meet a life-loving, interesting lady, to share love, laughter and the future together. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 114479

HOPING TO FIND LOVE Caring, honest Oxford male, 52, non smoker, likes DIY, gardening, walking, keeping fit, seeks caring, honest female, for lasting love and a happy future. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 154616 or send a text to 80360

ALL TO LOVE Kind and caring Oxfordshire male, 53, brown hair, green eyes, GSOH, searching for a nice, genuine girl, for friendship first, then maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 146127

EYE TO EYE Nice gent, 53, enjoys history, coastal walks, architecture, walking, cosy nights in, cooking, DIY, would like to meet a lady for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 152776 or send a text to 80360

THE START OF SOMETHING NEW? Mature Oxford male, 55, 5'8", green eyes, N/5, likes music, walking and keeping fit, GSOH, would like to meet a nice, bright lady, for fun times and see where that leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 159203 or send a text to 80360

TAKE CHARGE Bright, humorous and optimistic Banbury man, 56, would like a date with a chatty, active woman, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 132836

MAKE A DATE Young-at-heart, blue-eyed Wallingford man, 57, GSOH, enjoys dancing, would like to meet a friendly lady, to get to know each other and see where that leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 159203 or send a text to 80360

SHARING GOOD TIMES Upbeat Burford widower, 59, own cars, works full time, likes days in and out, countryside walks, driving, looking for a similar woman for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 17916 or send a text to 80360

I CAN MAKE YOU FEEL SPECIAL Solvent, easygoing, professional Banbury male, 63, enjoys the finer things in life, would like to meet a cuddly, loving and laid back woman, for affectionate times and a loving relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 156356 or send a text to 80360

LET'S SEE IF WE MATCH Young at heart Oxford male, 66, enjoys slow walks, reading and cosy nights in with great conversation, would like to meet an interesting, vibrant woman, for fun, friendship and possibly love. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 153137 or send a text to 80360

LONG LASTING HAPPINESS Solvent, retired business gent, North Oxfordshire, 67, own home and car etc, with a love of cinema, travel and new adventure, seeks a nice, loyal, feminine lady, for companionship then who knows? Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 132140

PUTTING THE SPARK BACK Easygoing, stocky built Oxford guy, 50, blue eyes, likes pubs, cinema, the arts, looking for a similar man 35-60, for companionship and hopefully we'll see where it leads to. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 115976 or send a text to 80360

SHOW YOUR COLOURS Honest, old fashioned, non-scene Oxford male, 57, fit, clean living, not into pubs, clubs or crowds, seeking a mature lady, for friendship, days out, holiday and fun times. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 865303

MAKE A CONNECTION Interesting, friendly Oxford male, 65, varied interests, loves walks, reading, travel and more, seeks sensitive male, similar age, for a loving relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 857624

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW... Easygoing, friendly Didcot male, 66, enjoys walks, theatre, cosy times in, socialising, seeks a friendly, active chap, for company and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 131800 or send a text to 80360

FROM THIS MOMENT Friendly, easygoing, fit Witney chap, 68, would like to meet an affectionate male, for company, companionship and hopefully more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143904

LET'S EXPLORE Abingdon male, 70, 5'9", medium build, easygoing and affectionate, looking for someone similar, to share fun and good times. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 453567 or send a text to 80360

PASSION FLOWER Youthful, friendly Oxford chap, 60, 5'9", dark hair, enjoys cinema, bowling, active days out and socialising, searching for a loving, happy and loyal woman, to build a lasting relationship with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 101122 or send a text to 80360

FUN AND LAUGHTER Honest, sensitive and decent Oxford man, 60, would like to find a warm-hearted, genuine, caring woman, to share laughter and enjoy life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 145981 or send a text to 80360

KEEPING WITH THE TIMES Happy go lucky, blue-eyed Banbury man, 60, 5'6", slim build, likes gardening, cinema, meals out, travel, country side and 60s music, seeks genuine lady, for friendship maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 156014 or send a text to 80360

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DECISION IS YOURS Honest, easygoing Yorkshire man living in Banbury, 60, 5'6", slim build, self-employed, likes gardening, cooking, cinema, travel, countryside, seeks genuine lady, to share life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140930 or send a text to 80360

SOUND LIKE YOUR MATCH? Tall, handsome, fit Abingdon male, 63, slim build, enjoys DIY, gardening, travel and walking, seeking a slim, petite, adventurous female, for good company and to enjoy a happy life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 159314 or send a text to 80360

SEE FOR YOURSELF Youthful, faithful, liberal and sympathetic Middlesbrough man, 73, looking for a sweet, sensitive woman, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 141502

SOUL TO SOUL Fun, talkative and friendly Oxford guy, 78, likes social drinks from time to time, just hoping to meet a bubbly, confident lady, to build a loving, lasting relationship with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 100937

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CakeLeisure

banburycake.co.uk/leisure

Scaling the beanstalk again

Times are hard in King Bertram's kingdom. "We've never known such poverty. We might as well be Greek," his resentful subjects grumble. The problem is that the Giant has imposed a punitive Giant Tax, the King explains.

Now that tax is to be doubled. Alas, the King is lying through his teeth: there is no Giant Tax, all the money is being shovelled into the King's own coffers – although what

By Giles Woodforde

he spends it on isn't clear, as he has no Queen, and his modest and charming daughter doesn't appear to frequent expensive shops.

So runs the storyline in this year's Chippy Panto, *Jack and the Giant*.

Although writer Ben Crocker has embellished the standard *Jack and the Beanstalk*, you'll be relieved to hear that Dame Trot still ends up triumphant, and there's still a beanstalk.

Up above, the Giant (Rowan Talbot, a Chippy regular) has acquired a wife (Emma Odell). She obviously can't be doing with too much ranting and roaring, and has quietened the Giant down considerably.

In fact he's a rather charming, if none too intellectual, old gentleman. His joints have become rather arthritic, but he still loves to dance the Conga – indeed, in one of the show's best routines, if the whole audience dances the Conga well enough, he will agree to release all his human prisoners unharmed.

The entrance to his lair is protected by four small but splendidly fearsome young dragons (Ellie-May Hatherly, Maddie Good, Jacob Robinson, and Hannah Burman), ruled over by a tough sergeant (Natasha Moore).

JJ Henry is making his debut as a panto dame, and drew a good "ahhh" of sympathy as he delivered Dame Trot's immortal first line: "I'm just a poor widow woman". His Dame is quite a restrained character, but delivers a delicious range of facial expressions, varying from the baffled to the outraged. Strong in support are Rachel Dawson, as sparky Jack; Max Gallagher, as Simple Simon, and Jessica Dyas, as warm and friendly Princess Beatrice.

As for King Bertram (Richard Emerson), his smile becomes positively sickening as he proceeds to defraud his subjects. All deliver Ollie Birch's bouncy songs with glee.

King Bertram's austerity measures seem to have hit the show itself in one respect: the sets are a bit basic, and don't radiate quite the level of magic atmosphere delivered in past years. But that apart, *Jack and the Giant* is well up to scratch.

Jack and the Giant runs at The Theatre, Chipping Norton, until January 12.

For tickets, call 01608 642350 or click on chippingnortontheatre.co.uk



Giants Emma Odell and Rowan Talbot appear in the production of *Jack and the Giant*, with Ruby Sale, eight and six-year-old brother Fenton



Amanda Holden attends the Chipping Norton Theatre pantomime and is pictured with some of the cast of *Jack and the Giant*

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in replacing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Trevor Skidmore feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show

how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Trevor a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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Paul to conjure up a treat

ONE of the UK's favourite entertainers, Paul Daniels, will be packing up his box of tricks for what could be the very last time... and is setting out on a national "first farewell" tour.

From the moment he burst out to our TV screens, Paul's magic shows have topped the ratings and he undoubtedly became the most successful TV magician of the 20th century and, by carrying on the "fame game" into the 21st century, became a true magical legend. From September, Paul has been travelling the nation with a new show full of his old favorite magic

tricks and a number of new tricks never performed in public before.

He will, of course, be joined by the lovely Debbie McGee, and their last live show, *Hair Today Gone Tomorrow*, garnered critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Festival and countrywide. From *Legend to Leg End* will no doubt be yet another enchanted evening of incredible illusion, comedy and amazement.

He will be at Banbury's Mill Arts Centre on Saturday, January 25. Call the box office on 01295 279002 for details.

CakeSport

banburycake.co.uk/sport

One draw and a defeat over the festive period leaves United 10th in Calor League Premier Division

Puritans snatch a point

BANBURY United scored twice in the last 10 minutes to rescue a dramatic point from their Premier Division match at home to Burnham on Saturday.

The hosts looked to be heading for their second defeat of the holiday period after a 5-3 loss at Hemel Hempstead on Boxing Day. But a penalty converted by Scott Bridges and a 90th minute equaliser from Marcus Green secured a draw. Banbury made the worst possible start, going behind after two minutes.

Keeper Dean Snedker did well to save a Ryan Blake effort with his feet.

But from the resultant corner, taken by Josh Webb, an unmarked Ryan Upward headed the ball home from six yards with Scott Bridges standing on the goal line unable to do anything but help the ball into the net.

Banbury were unfortunate not to equalise in the final minute of the first half when Bridges fed the ball through to Kynan Isaac, whose curling shot brought a magnificent save from Burnham keeper Michael Watkins, who tipped the ball around the post for a corner.

Three minutes into the second half, the Puritans were 2-0 down.

From a quick break, the ball was played up to Blake wide on the right. With Banbury short of numbers at the back, his centred ball upward totally unmarked and he calmly slotted the ball home past the advancing Snedker.

Banbury Utd 2
(Bridges pen 81, Green 90)

Burnham 2
(Upward 2, 48)

Banbury were handed a lifeline in the 81st minute when Aaron Morgan crossed into the Burnham penalty area and Isaac was bundled over.

Watkins was unlucky not to save the resultant spot-kick from Bridges.

The keeper guessed correctly, but the ball had enough pace on it to spin back over the line and into the net.

Banbury pushed forward with more purpose and equalised in the final minute of normal time.

Isaac chased down and took the ball off a defender on the right by-line.

He then crossed into the penalty area where Watkins pushed the ball away but only as far as substitute Green, who shot low into the corner of the net from the edge of the penalty area to the delight of the home fans.

Banbury United: Snedker, Bridges, Abrahams, Isaac, Simpson (Evangelinos 74), Ryan, McNulty, Dios, Skendi (M Green 85), Morgan, Talabi (Mbamarah 57). Subs not used: Pinto, Dumbleton.

Attendance: 269



Banbury's Kyal McNulty is fouled by a sliding tackle from Burnham's Jee Maloney and screams in agony as he hits the deck

STARS with Claire Petulengro

Service provided by IMS Leeds LS1 8LB. Calls cost 60p per minute at all times

ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19 **LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

Areas which you thought were a no go are given a boost by the stars this week and you find yourself able to move on in areas you thought you were going to have to give up on. This is your time Aries, so get ready to show what you're made of. You're about to find out how well you can stand your ground in a personal issue too! Ring now for more advice and predictions.

0906 585 4360 **0906 585 4366**

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20 **SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Something that you were worried was going to happen is unlikely to. Instead of worrying about tomorrow, concentrate on today. This is one week where you will be able to plainly see what and who needs your attention. Don't let other beguiling influences convince you otherwise. Give me a ring to hear why this is a great time to go for new job interviews and professional challenges.

0906 585 4361 **0906 585 4367**

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20 **SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You're very good at listening to other peoples' advice this week, but you're not so good at taking your own. Maybe if I knew you had told those around you the whole truth, then I would tell you to follow their words of wisdom, but aspects suggest you're only telling them half the story. New love interests make for an interesting weekend. Ring now to hear which sign I'd make your soul mate.

0906 585 4362 **0906 585 4368**

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22 **CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

Jupiter forces you to look at your future from a more mature angle, which could see you worrying about things which don't even need to be addressed yet. You want answers from those around you, that much is clear, but just make sure you're not asking for things you're not ready for yet. Ring now to find out why it's worth putting in overtime, even if it's for free this month.

0906 585 4363 **0906 585 4369**

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22 **AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You've allowed a situation in your life to spiral out of control, but the good news Leo, is that you still have time this weekend to turn things around in your favour. Mercury hands you a way with words, so use this gift to enlist the help you need to get your house in order again. Gemini has a career break to offer you. Ring now to hear why your house of love is looking so interesting.

0906 585 4364 **0906 585 4370**

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22 **PISCES** Feb 19-Mar 20

Don't take ideas for promises or you could end up disappointed. Make sure you follow up all conversations and get any professional agreements in writing, even if it means paying for it. Virgo. Games are being played in love and it looks as if it's you who's trying to play them. Playing it straight and telling it like it is can get you the real prize. Ring now for support and clear vision.

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All is not lost, as tense thriller may win award

ALL IS LOST (12A, 106 mins)
Thriller/Action. Robert Redford.
Director: JC Chandor.

Bona fide movie stars are a rare commodity in Hollywood, but Robert Redford has been burning bright for more than 50 years in iconic films including *Barefoot In The Park*, *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*, *The Sting*, *All The President's Men*, *Out Of Africa*.

Looking back over those performances, it's hard to believe the Californian-born actor has never been feted at the Academy Awards.

Admittedly, Redford collected a statuette as Best Director of *Ordinary People*, but when it comes to his work in front of the camera, plaudits have been scarce.

All Is Lost might be the film to right that wrong.

Written and directed by JC Chandor, whose debut *Margin Call* was a tautly-paced drama set on the floor of a Wall Street investment bank, this lean, nail-biting thriller required the 76-year-old actor to perform many of his own stunts.

He is in almost every single frame and, apart from a couple of lines spoken into a yacht's malfunctioning radio, Redford has to convey his stricken character's inner turmoil without uttering a word.

The film opens on a July 13, approximately 1,700 nautical miles

from the Sumatra Straits, with an unnamed sailor (Redford) preparing to surrender his soul to the sea.

"I fought to the end," he whispers in voiceover, "I'm not sure what that's worth, but know that I did..."

We glide back in time eight days to find the same sailor midway through a voyage across the Indian Ocean.

His 39-foot yacht collides with a wayward metal container, which has been shed from a cargo vessel. The yacht's hull is breached but the captain patches up his craft and continues his journey.

Mother Nature is cruel though, and throws up a storm that batters the boat and leaves the sailor with dwindling food and water supplies. As sharks circle the stricken vessel, the sailor must use celestial navigation to chart a course back to humanity via the nearby shipping lanes.

All Is Lost touches on similar themes to Alfonso Cuarón's blockbuster *Gravity* – solitude, mortality, the indomitability of the human spirit – albeit without the whizz-bang digital effects.

Redford delivers a mesmerising solo performance.

Every emotion is etched on his face and at every heart-breaking turn, we understand the churn of emotions beneath his wind-battered surface.

Chandor orchestrates action sequences with aplomb, contrasting



Robert Redford is pictured in a scene from *All Is Lost*

Picture: PA Photo/
Universal Pictures UK

the sound and fury of the storm with the eerily beautiful calm of fish moving beneath the yacht.

Cast adrift with Redford on this unforgettable journey, we pray for salvation, even when the last flicker of hope has been extinguished.

"I tried to be strong," he tells us in voiceover.

We try to be too, but tears born of frustration eventually flow.

CakeWhat's on

Music

SATURDAY:

Burton Taylor Studio, Gloucester Street, Oxford: Tribute to John Coltrane. With Paul Dunmall tenor sax and Tony Bianco drums.

Support from Jazz Services/PRS and LAM, the Oxford Jazz Masters Series launches the 2014 season with two great UK based musicians paying tribute to the jazz giant John Coltrane. Hosts George Haslam reeds and Steve Kershaw double bass. 8pm. £10, £8. 01865 305305.

Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock: In House Disco. Bop the night away with a free disco. 8pm. Free admission. 01993 812094.

SUNDAY:

Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, Cowley Place, Oxford: Fidelio Trio. Darragh Morgan (violin), Robin Michael (cello), Mary Dullea (piano). Music to include Schubert Notturmo in E flat, op 148; Deane Marche Oubliee; Beethoven Piano Trio Op 70 No 1 'Ghost'. 8.15pm. £10 stalls/ £5 student. Tickets on the door. 01865 286660.

TUESDAY:

The Old Fire Station, 40 George

Street, Oxford: Oxford

Improvisers New Year social. Join us for a sociable evening of music making to usher in the New Year and blow away the January blues! £5. 07773 796244.

Theatre

The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park, Banbury:

Jan 10-19, *Aladdin*. Side splitting comedy, stunning sets, beautiful costumes and a fantastic cast. Packed with all the traditional panto ingredients, this is a magic carpet ride you won't want to miss! Tue-Thu 10.30am, 1pm, Fri 1.30pm, Fri-Sat 7.30pm, Sat-Sun 2.30pm. £10, concession 38, family (4) £32.

Box office: 01295 279002.

The Theatre, Spring Street,

Chipping Norton:

Until Jan 12 *Jack and the Giant*. The season for panto' is here. A boy and his cow, a giant and his castle in the clouds, beanstalks, bravery and beautiful princesses – all feature in our unique twist on this classic story. Tickets £5-25 (varies according to date).

Box office: 01608 642350.

New Theatre, George Street,

Oxford:

Until Jan 5, *Cats*. Andrew Lloyd-

Webber's musical. 7.30pm, mats 2.30pm, Sun 3pm. Tickets £10-£42.50. Call box office for full details, plus matinees.

Jan 7-8, *Gene and Eddie*. Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran. £25. 7.30pm. £25 (£28.90 online or by phone).

Jan 9-10, *Three Steps to Heaven*. Rock 'n' roll concert featuring the music of The Big 'O', Elvis and Buddy. Thu 7.30pm, Fri 5.30pm and 8.30pm. £28.90 + trans fee.

Jan 11, *Winter Dance Party*. Featuring the music of Buddy Holly and the Crickets, the Big Bopper, Ritchie Valens, Dion and the Belmonts. 2.30 and 7.30pm. £28.90 with transaction fee.

Box office: 0844 871 3020.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont

Street, Oxford:

Until Jan 12, the Playhouse pantomime, *Robin Hood*, written and directed by Peter Duncan. Expect non-stop thrills and spills as Robin, Marian and The Merry Men battle the evil Sheriff of Nottingham in a classic tale to delight the family. Favourite characters, sing-along tunes, dancing, slapstick silliness and chances to join in. Tickets £14 to £24.50 depending on dates. Box office: 01865 305305.

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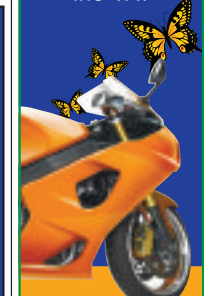
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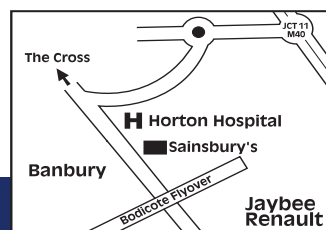
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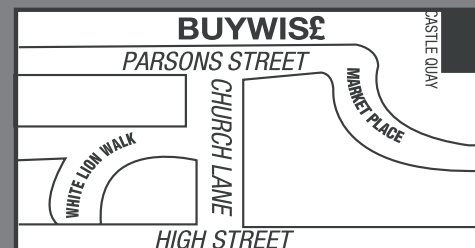
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